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To: Councillor Donnelly, Convener; Councillor Carle, Vice Convener; Councillors Cormie, Delaney, Dickson, Lesley Dunbar, Graham, Grant, Ironside CBE, Kiddie, Malik, Nathan Morrison, Stuart, Samarai and Yuill.

Town House,
ABERDEEN 11 September 2013

PETITIONS COMMITTEE

Members of the **PETITIONS COMMITTEE** are requested to meet in Committee Room 2 - Town House on **THURSDAY, 19 SEPTEMBER 2013 at 2pm.**

JANE G. MACEACHRAN
HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

BUSINESS

- 1 Orders of Reference and Arrangements for Petitions Committee (Pages 1 - 4)

Website Address: www.aberdeencity.gov.uk

If you require any further information about this agenda, please contact Rebecka Coull, email rcoull@aberdeencity.gov.uk or tel. (52)2869

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Petitions Committee Arrangements

Meetings of the Petitions Committee

Meetings will be cancelled if no valid petitions have been received (with the required number of signatures) ten working days prior to the next scheduled meeting.

Powers of Committee/ Orders of Reference

It is proposed that the Orders of Reference for the Petitions Committee be as follows –

To consider and respond to petitions addressed to Aberdeen City Council in accordance with the Council's approved petitions procedure.

Petitions will only be considered if the criteria outlined in the procedure note have been met. An information bulletin report detailing any petitions which have been received but have not met the criteria will be circulated to members of the Committee.

The Committee will for each valid petition:

- (1) take no action and advise the petitioner of the Committee's reasoning; or
- (2) agree that the matter be the subject of a report to the relevant committee(s) (petitions can be referred with or without a recommendation); or
- (3) refer the matter to a relevant organisation with or without a recommendation.

Draft Petitions Procedure

A petition will require 250 signatures from individuals in Aberdeen City (all signatories must be on the Register of Electors for the Aberdeen City Council area **or** ten local businesses, voluntary organisations and/or social enterprise companies and/ or Community Planning Partner and/or other body.

If there is any missing information, such as no contact address, staff in Democratic Services will make every effort to contact the lead petitioner about this to help it conform with the procedures.

Information about any individual will not be used for any purpose other than in relation to the petition.

Petitions received by Mail, Email or Hand Delivery

A Petitions Form (available to download from the Council website, or from staff in Democratic Services) must be completed and submitted to the clerk to the Petitions Committee ten working days prior to a scheduled meeting of the Petitions Committee. Petitions will be checked by the staff in Democratic Services, and, if required, the Director responsible for the subject matter of the petition. If the petition is deemed valid, it will be submitted to the next scheduled meeting of the Petitions Committee. A valid petition received less than ten

working days prior to a scheduled meeting, will be considered at the subsequent scheduled meeting.

E-Petitions

A Petitions Form received and hosted on the Aberdeen City Council website, must have the required number of signatures ten working days prior to a scheduled meeting. A petition can be hosted online for a maximum of twelve weeks. There will be no minimum period.

A Petitions Form will only require one signature in order to be hosted online.

Petitions from businesses can not be hosted online.

A combination of paper and online signatures is acceptable.

A petitioner has to specifically request (via the website) that a petition be hosted on the Aberdeen City Council website – for clarity, paper petitions received will not be hosted online.

The Council is unable to consider petitions on the following:

- (1) Matters that are sub-judice, that is, matters that are the subject of any current court proceedings
- (2) Planning, licensing and other matters with their own procedures
- (3) Matters which should be dealt with through the Aberdeen City Council complaints procedure or through the Ombudsman
- (4) Matters concerning individual elected members or Council employees
- (5) Employees' terms and conditions
- (6) Housing allocations in respect of individuals
- (7) A decision taken by Aberdeen City Council in the previous 12 months
- (8) A matter which is very similar to, or the same as, a petition which the Committee has considered in the previous twelve months
- (9) A matter which is the subject of an outstanding committee remit
- (10) Matters designed to gain or reduce support for one or more political parties
- (11) Matters that could damage a person's reputation or discriminate against them
- (12) Personal or business interests
- (13) An allegation pertaining to people or organisations breaking the law or codes of practice
- (14) An allegation or matter which could be defamatory (contain information which is not true), discriminate against someone or contain offensive language, for example swear words, insulting, sarcastic or provocative language or other terms that could reasonably be considered as offensive by the reader

Councillors cannot submit or sign petitions.

The lead petitioner (and two supporters) will be invited to attend the meeting at which the petition will be considered to speak for up to ten minutes in support of it with a further ten minutes allowed for questions from the Committee. For the avoidance of doubt, Standing Order 10 will not apply to the Petitions Committee, and therefore deputations will not be permitted.

The Committee can consider two or more petitions together if they are similar or if they deal with the same subject. The lead petitioner will be told about this beforehand and will be asked to make either joint statements or individual statements for each petition.

Guidance Note for Petitions Committee

A guidance note will be produced, which will be placed on the Council's website. It will detail the powers of the Committee, and make clear the information required, and the procedures to be followed when submitting petitions.

Recommendations:

That the Committee:

- (a) agree the Orders of Reference for the Committee as follows:
To consider and respond to petitions addressed to Aberdeen City Council in accordance with the Council's approved petitions procedure.
- (b) recommend that the Scheme of Delegation be updated to grant powers to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to determine the validity of petitions;
- (c) agree the proposed arrangements for the submission of petitions to Aberdeen City Council.

Petitions submitted to other local authorities

Edinburgh City Council

Crackdown on legal loan sharks (938 signatures)
A Safer Mechanism for reporting ECC Mismanagement (515 signatures)
Princes Street for People (592 signatures)
Bedroom Tax (988 signatures)
Remove Religious Observance from Non Denominational Schools (896 signatures)
Retain Religious Observance from Non Denominational Schools (1522 signatures)
East Craigs Primary School Catchment Area – already being considered by a committee
Save the House Concerts – related to a planning matter
Closure of Holyrood Park to Through Traffic – only 171 signatures
Dog Control – only 112 signatures

East Lothian Council

To call on East Lothian Council to close Alderston Road (Haddington) at the Railway Walk Bridge due to safety issues (46 signatures)
To call on East Lothian Council to keep the Railway Bridge on Alderston Road (Haddington) open to vehicular traffic to and from Alderston Meadow, as per the current arrangements for the last 16 years (172 signatures)

Stirling Council

Road Safety between Killearn and Balfron (25 signatures (only 23 on electoral roll but had support of the Community Council so competent))

North Ayrshire

St Luke's Primary School: Accommodation Pressures (212 signatures)
Street Lighting at Kinneil Park, Lamlash, Arran (10 signatures)

Midlothian Council

To introduce a 20 mph Speed Limit in Lasswade Village (254 signatures)
To keep Community Facilities in Newtongrange in Council Ownership and to introduce a regular repair and maintenance programme in respect thereof (1 signature)
To make Midlothian Council aware of the opposition of Gorebridge residents to the possible closure of Gorebridge Leisure Centre and Library and to introduce a regular repair and maintenance programme in respect thereof (4327 signatures)
To stop the demolition of Bonnyrigg Leisure Centre (July) for at least 12 months (211 signatures)
Stop the Closure of the current Newbattle Swimming Pool and its relocation to the proposed new Newbattle High School (1 signature)
Coaching and Instructor Services in Leisure Centres (1040 signatures)
Waste Recycling Centre – Penicuik (1 signature)
Speed Reduction on Musselburgh Road, Dalkeith (115 signatures received)
Keep Newtongrange Library in its current location on the High Street (1231 signatures received)
Keep all Midlothian Public Toilets Open (1589 signatures)

Glasgow City Council

Discrimination against Kinship Children (25 signatures)